The Common Core State Standards call for students in grade 3 to proficiently read grade-appropriate complex literature and informational text (RL/RI.3.10) such that they can ask and answer questions by referring explicitly to a text (RL/RI.3.1). Students delve deeply into texts to uncover both the central message and supporting details, identifying the logical connections between sentences and paragraphs in a text. They can compare and contrast two or more works with the same topic, author, or character, describing the traits, motivations, and feelings of characters or how ideas relate to one another. Additional [Standards for Reading Literature](http://corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards/reading-literature/grade-3/) (RL.3.2-9) and [Standards for Reading Informational Text](http://corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards/reading-informational-text/grade-3/) (RI.3.2-9) offer detailed expectations for student academic performance in preparation for college and careers.

Helping students understand what they read is a crucial element of grade 3. In grades K-2, children begin to master the decoding skills described in the [Standards for Reading: Foundational Skills](http://corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards/reading-foundational-skills/grade-3/). Students in grade 3 use these emerging skills to negotiate multisyllabic words, which in turn increases their fluency and confidence when reading new and unfamiliar material. Students emerge from grade 3 with an ever-expanding academic vocabulary that they use in their writing and speaking.

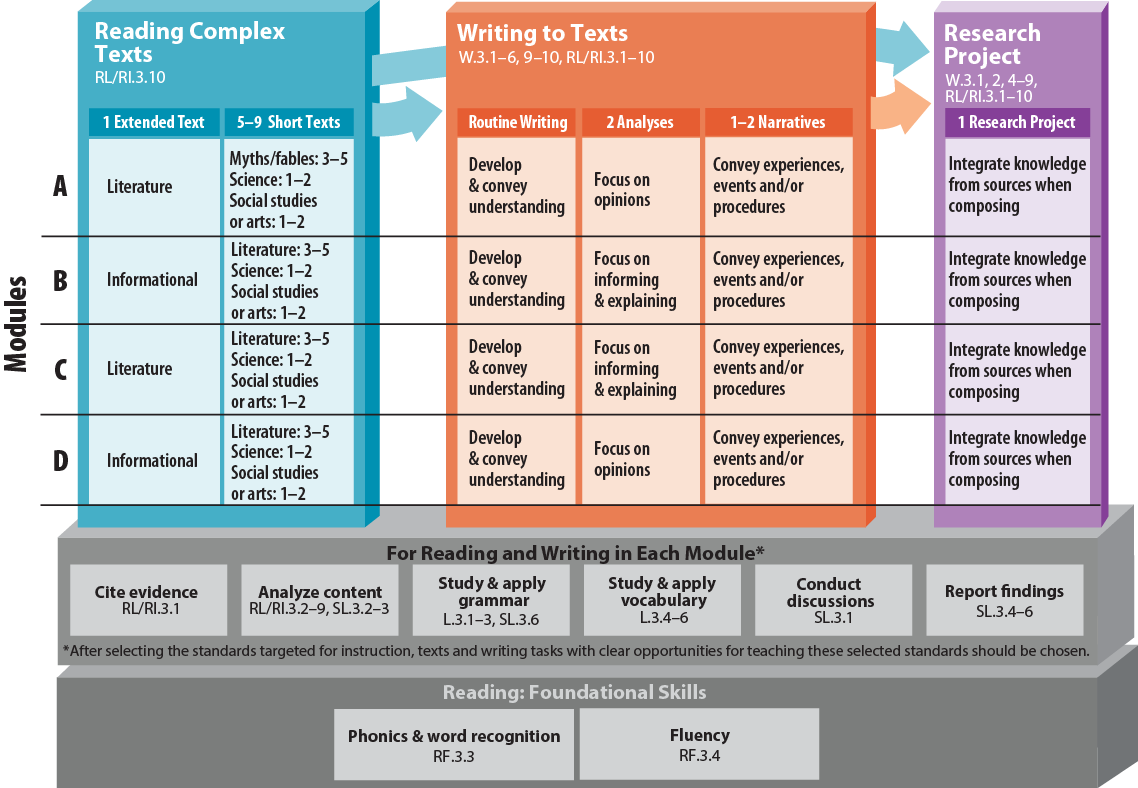
In support of the reading standards, students are taught to ask questions of a speaker or classmate to deepen understanding of the material in ways elaborated in the [Standards for Speaking and Listening](http://corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards/speaking-and-listening/grade-3/). Students read aloud fluently and offer appropriate elaboration on the ideas of classmates, building on what has been said before.

Two new [Writing Standards](http://corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards/writing/grade-3/) (W.3.4 and W.3.10) are introduced in grade 3. They call for students to develop and organize writing in a manner appropriate to the task and purpose and to write routinely for a range of timeframes and contexts. Gaining expertise at writing narratives teaches students to describe accurately what happened and helps them recognize and select the most relevant information when reading. Students’ readings of history and science texts provide models of connecting and sequencing ideas when writing to inform/explain or to express an opinion. In all student writing, the use of specific facts and descriptive details is emphasized, as is correct spelling and punctuation.

There are two additional instructional priorities to address over the course of grade 3 regarding the foundational skills of reading:

* Grade 3 is a pivotal year for students to build their word analysis skills so that they are reliably able to make sense of multisyllabic words in books (RF.3.3).

Reading fluency assessments administered at the start of the year (and throughout the year as necessary) should be used to determine a student’s fluency level. Students who have not yet achieved grade-level fluency and students learning English will need direct fluency instruction. Like their more proficient peers, they will need opportunities to build fluency through independent reading and opportunities to analyze closely how syntax and the meaning(s) of the text influence expression and phrasing (RF.3.4).



*\*The chart organizes the standards into four quarter-length modules that include the knowledge and skills students will learn and apply over the course of the year. These modules are offered as optional models to consider when constructing a year-long course of instruction. The chart is meant to illustrate and provide context for the standards (but not replace engaging with the standards themselves).\**

**Reading Complex Texts**

Exposing students to grade-level texts of appropriate complexity lies at the heart of each module. The modules reflect the balance of **50 percent** informational text and **50 percent** literature that students are expected to read, including reading in ELA, science, social studies, and the arts.

***Five to nine short texts from across the curriculum:*** Selections would include short texts from across the curriculum of sufficient complexity for close reading (with emphasis in one module on reading myths/fables) that would allow students to draw evidence from the texts and present their analyses in writing as well as through speaking.[1] (Though the chart shows the module with myths/fables first, this is only an example of how one might organize the modules; some educators may want to emphasize the reading of Greek myths later in the academic year). Educators can create coherence within the curriculum as a whole by choosing short texts to complement the extended text described below, by focusing instruction on similar standards and skills across multiple genres, and by choosing informational texts that build the background knowledge needed to read and comprehend other texts students will study. (Shorter texts could account for about three to four weeks of instruction.)

* ***Literature***includes adventure stories, folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, and drama, with a special emphasis on myth, as well as nursery rhymes, narrative poems, limericks, and free verse (Common Core State Standards, page 31).
* ***Informational texts*** include biographies and autobiographies; books about history, social studies, science, and the arts; technical texts, including directions, forms and information displayed in graphs, charts, or maps; and digital sources on a range of topics written for a broad audience (Common Core State Standards, page 31).

***One extended text:*** This should be an extended, full-length work of literature (such as a novel or a play) or longer informational text, depending on the focus of the module. Like the others, this text would be aligned with the complexity and range specifications of the standards. As with shorter texts, students would perform a close, analytic reading of the extended text; compare and synthesize ideas across other related texts; conduct text-focused discussions; and produce written work aligned with the standards. (Such a study could take around two to three weeks of concentrated focus on a single text.)

**Writing to Texts**

The balance of student writing should be **65 percent analytical** (30 percent opinions and 35 percent to explain/inform) and 35 percent narrative with a mix of on-demand and review-and-revision writing assignments. Building student competence and confidence with technology should be part of instruction. See the [Writing Standards Progression](http://writing-standards-progression-grade-4-grade-5/)[from Grade 2 to Grade 3](http://parcc.synaxis-dev.com/mcf/english-language-artsliteracy/writing-standards-progression-grade-2-grade-3).

***Routine writing:*** Routine writing, such as short constructed-responses to text-dependent questions, builds content knowledge and provides opportunities for reflection on a specific aspect of a text or texts. Routine written responses to such text-dependent questions allow students to build sophisticated understandings of vocabulary, text structure and content and to develop needed proficiencies in analysis.

***At least two analyses per module:*** All analytic writing should put a premium on using evidence (RL/RI.3.1), as well as on crafting works that display some logical integration and coherence (W.3.4, W.3.5 and L.3.1-3). These responses can vary in length based on the questions asked and task performed, from answering brief questions to crafting longer responses, allowing teachers to assess students’ ability to paraphrase, infer, and ultimately integrate the ideas they have gleaned from what they have read. Over the course of the year, analytic writing should include comparative analysis and compositions that share findings from the research project.

***One or two narratives per module:*** Narrative writing offers students opportunities to express personal ideas and experiences; craft their own stories and descriptions; and deepen their understandings of literary concepts, structures, and genres (e.g., short stories, anecdotes, poetry, drama) through purposeful imitation. It also provides an additional opportunity for students to reflect on what they read through imaginative writing and to practice sequencing events and ideas through narrative descriptions.

**Research Project**

Each module includes the opportunity for students to compose one extended project that uses research to address a significant topic, problem, or issue. This task should entail integrating knowledge about a topic drawn from one or more texts from the module, taking brief notes on sources, and sorting evidence into provided categories. Students can present their findings in a variety of modes in both informal and more formal contexts. Ongoing incorporation of research for shorter tasks should also be a regular component of instruction.

**For Reading and Writing in Each Module**

In each module, students are expected to take a close look at the texts they encounter through the lenses of the following skills rooted in the standards.

***Cite evidence:*** The goal of close, analytic reading is to be able to discern and cite evidence from the text to support assertions. In grade 3, students should refer explicitly to the text as the basis for answers (RL/RI.3.1).

***Analyze content:*** The content of each text should determine which standards (RL/RI.3.2-9 and SL.3.2-3) to target, allowing teachers to focus instruction and ensure that all the standards have been taught by the end of the year.

***Study and apply grammar:*** While grammar is meant to be a normal, everyday part of what students do, students should be taught explicit lessons in grammar as they read, write, and speak, guided by L.3.1-3.

***Study and apply vocabulary:*** To focus vocabulary instruction on words that students would be encouraged to use in writing and speaking, students should be given 5–10 Tier 2 academic words per week for each text (L.3.4-6). Students require multiple exposures to targeted vocabulary words in authentic contexts to retain an understanding of the words’ meaning(s) and use the words effectively when writing and speaking.

***Conduct discussions:*** Students should engage in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, small group, teacher-led), enabling them to ask questions to check their understanding and stay on topic while explaining their own understanding in light of the discussion (SL.3.1).

***Report findings:*** Students should tell a story, recount an experience, or report on a topic or text with appropriate facts and descriptive details, speaking clearly, at an appropriate pace (SL.3.4-6).

**For Reading Foundation Skills in Each Module**

In each module, students are expected to recognize words and read with fluency through the lenses of the following skills rooted in the standards.

*Decode words:* Students should apply their knowledge of phonics and word analysis to be able to recognize the words they encounter when reading texts (RF.3.3).

*Read fluently:* Students should be able to read with accuracy and fluency to be able to comprehend texts sufficiently (RF.3.4).